THE

Reconstructionist

Vol. X. November 17, 1944 Kislev 1, 5705 No. 14

EDITORIALS
- *Individual Rights Are Not Enough*
- *The American Zionist Emergency Council*
- *Lawlessness in Palestine*

NOTES ON INTERFAITH WORK BY JEWS — *By Leo Trepp*

FAITH (Concluded) — *By Abraham J. Heschel*

BOOK NOTES — *By David Polish*, *By Bernard Isaacs*

REALITIES AND VALUES

AS THE SERVICEMAN SEES IT

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

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THE
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EDITORIALS

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS ARE NOT ENOUGH

A "DECLARATION of Human Rights," prepared by the American Jewish Committee, was submitted recently to a number of American Jews and non-Jews for approval. On the surface it is an innocuous document, almost platitudinous. But when one probes beneath the surface, one discovers in this document another manifestation of the type of thinking that resulted in the Committee's withdrawal from the American Jewish Conference. The following is a brief summary of the Declaration:

The dignity and inviolability of the individual human being are the cornerstone of civilization, upon which must rest all that we cherish. (1) Therefore an International Bill of Rights must be promulgated, guaranteeing life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to everyone everywhere. (2) No nation, on the plea of sovereignty, shall be permitted to deprive its inhabitants of these rights, for (3) these are matters of international concern, inasmuch as their violation by one nation places the burden of relief upon other nations. (4) Hitler's victims shall be given redress. (5) Exiles and deportees shall be allowed to return to the lands of their birth if they so desire, or (6) to settle, with international aid, in other lands. Thus may we move toward a just and peaceful world.

Although a cursory reading finds nothing objectionable in what the Declaration states, there are deliberate omissions from its program which must be studied against the background of the American Jewish Committee's general attitude to Jewish life. When so studied, they disclose a purpose behind the issuing of this Declaration that makes it a danger to the future of Judaism.

Inasmuch as the protection of *Jewish* rights called the American Jewish Committee into being, we may assume, although the word "Jew" nowhere appears, that this Declaration was published as a preliminary step in the solution of *Jewish* post-war problems. Internal evidence in the Declaration also makes this clear, for points 4-6 have nothing whatever to do with a bill of rights, but address themselves to the specific problem of redress for Hitler's victims.

Now these pertinent facts must be considered: The American Jewish Conference, at its plenary session on September 2, 1943, *when the Committee was*

still a member of the Conference, passed a resolution on an "International Bill of Rights." This resolution covered roughly the same ground as the Committee's current Declaration. But it included one pivotal additional affirmation, "the inalienable right of all religious, ethnic, and cultural groups to maintain and foster their respective group identities on the basis of equality." This resolution, slightly modified, but containing verbatim the phrase just cited, was submitted by the Conference to Under-Secretary of State Stettinius in August, 1944. An introduction pointed out the special attention required for Jewish needs because of the unique position of Jews "resulting from the German war of extermination against them."

These facts reveal the Committee's motive. Why did the American Jewish Committee publish this Declaration two months after the Conference's memorandum? The answer is obvious. The most significant fact about the issuance of this Declaration on the heels of the Conference's memorandum is the Declaration's emphasis on *individual* rights and its conspicuous omission of an affirmation of *group* rights.

We are dealing here with a fundamental problem. Are Jews simply *individuals* who happen to have certain religious convictions in common and who require no attention to their needs other than that given to individuals of all faiths? The American Jewish Committee answers in the affirmative.

Or are Jews a people with a group identity and cultural interests, not limited to religion, and with special problems that require special (not privileged) attention? The Conference, the Zionists, and the American Jewish Congress answer in the affirmative.

The issue that is presented by these two conflicting attitudes is one that has been with us ever since the Emancipation. When the Jews were given civic equality with the non-Jews in the modern nations, it was not as a recognition of the equality of Judaism with other ways of living. It was rather on the assumption, sometimes tacitly implied and often explicitly stated, that, given freedom and equality, Jews would eventually cease to live as Jews and fuse with the Gentile population in all respects, *including religion.* Many Jews acquiesced in that assumption and went so far as to submit to baptism. Others accepted it with reservations as to Jewish religion and then proceeded to modify Jewish religion in a way that stripped it of all that was distinctly Jewish. But the rank and file of Jewry still wanted to live a Jewish life, to share a common destiny with Jews throughout the world and to look upon Palestine as a holy land consecrated not only by memories of the Jewish past but by hopes for the Jewish future. The American Jewish Committee, however, is still afraid to assert the right of Jews to any common cultural and social interests, compatible though these are with the interests of America. They feel that the surrender of the Jewish way of life is a price that Jews may legitimately be asked to pay for the freedom to live as human beings.

Thus analyzed in the light of all the relevant facts, the position of the American Jewish Committee, which it seeks to implement through its Declaration, is identical with that of the American Council for Judaism. In a memorandum recently submitted to Secretary Hull, by Lessing Rosenwald, its President, the American Council for Judaism opposes the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth on the ground that: "The solution to the problems of Jews rests on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the individual. Once that concept of human

freedom is unqualifiedly accepted, Jews will require no special measure."

That, as Zionists, we utterly disagree with the American Council for Judaism is well known, but we can at least credit the Council with being candid and forthright in its anti-Zionism. We cannot give equal credit to the American Jewish Committee. It prepares a Declaration on what is ostensibly an affirmation of universal human rights from which no one dissents, and seeks the signature of Zionists and non-Zionists alike to its Declaration, but it insinuates into that document an ideology which has repeatedly been used as a most potent weapon against the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home. We caution all survivalist Jews against falling into the trap concealed in this seemingly innocuous document.

THE AMERICAN ZIONIST EMERGENCY COUNCIL

IT is no secret that, prior to the recent convention of the ZOA in Atlantic City, a rift was in the making between certain leaders of the Executive Committee of the ZOA and the leaders of the Emergency Council. Although an echo of this clash of opposing views was heard at the convention, the differences between the two groups were ironed out, harmony restored, and a minor crisis averted.

Whatever the grievances of the opposition were and are, and we do not intend to go into them now, there is no gainsaying that the American Zionist Emergency Council has done a magnificent job of public relations during the past year. The Council was reorganized in August 1943 with Dr. Abba Hillel Silver and Dr. Stephen S. Wise as co-chairmen of the Council and with Dr. Silver as sole chairman of its Executive Committee. Dr. Silver took over the helm at a time when the precursor of the Council, the American Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs, was plagued by the absence of strong centralized direction and by lack of an aggressive policy, and when Zionist prestige in United States political and diplomatic circles was at a low ebb. Dr. Silver has given the Council a dynamic and bold leadership which has revitalized Zionist political activity in this country.

The Council has initiated a program of Zionist public relations and political activity on a scale never before attempted. With a large budget at its command, it has set up a central office in New York with some fourteen departments, and a permanent bureau in Washington, D. C. It has organized more than 300 local emergency committees. It has strengthened and enlarged the several associations of Christian friends of Zionism. It has succeeded in reaching, as never before, the press of the country and the legislatures of many of the States. It has, through its sponsorship of radio addresses, large gatherings and rallies, through press releases and other methods of publicity, reached a larger number of Jews and non-Jews than ever before. All this has born fruit.

The most important political step taken by the Council was, of course, the introduction of the Palestine Resolution in both Houses of Congress. Despite the overwhelming support of Senators and Congressmen, action on the Resolution was deferred at the request of the War Department. For a while Zionist spirits sagged, and it seemed as if the splendid and truly gigantic work of promotion carried on in connection with the Resolution, would go for naught, or might even backfire.

However, since that time, both the Council and the Zionist movement have scored notable victories, such as the adoption of resolutions favoring a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine by both the

Democratic and the Republican National Conventions, the favorable statement of presidential candidate, Thomas Dewey, and the message of President Roosevelt to the ZOA Convention and in the withdrawal by the War Department of its previous objection to the introduction of the Palestine Resolution in Congress. There is no doubt that the Resolution will be introduced and passed by both Houses, just as soon as Congress convenes after the elections.

The most heartening fact about the American Zionist Emergency Council, one which has not been given due emphasis, is that the Council represents the four major Zionist bodies in this country. The ZOA, with its tremendous membership and prestige, has, of course, provided most of the able leadership in the Council, but Hadassah, Mizrachi, and the Poale Zion groups have given their unstinting loyalty and cooperation to the Council. The Council has demonstrated that the different Zionist parties can work together in the political field, despite ideological differences. This should be an earnest of what Zionist groups might be able to do together in other spheres of Zionist activity such as culture, education and the arts. It should give aid and encouragement to those who are working for the organization of the American Jewish Community.

LAWLESSNESS IN PALESTINE

WE note with mortification the outbreak of terroristic acts by a few irresponsible Jews in Palestine. Even as we go to press, we learn of the shocking assassination of Lord Moyne, British Resident Minister in the Middle East, which has been attributed to Jewish terrorists. These acts and their perpetrators have been properly and publicly denounced by all responsible Jewish agencies and newspapers inside and outside of Palestine. The individual criminals have been identified as belonging to a small band of political extremists, who sincerely believe that they can wrest political justice from the government by acts of violence when other measures have failed. In the eyes of the British government, the Yishuv, the Jewish Agency, and world Jewry, they have only brought disgrace and damage to the just cause of Zionism. Because these extremists have refused to heed the appeal of these agencies to desist from their evil ways, the National Council of Palestine Jewry (*Vaad Leumi*), the Inner Zionist General Council, representing the supreme administrative institution of the world Zionist movement, and the Jewish Agency Executive have unanimously passed resolutions not only condemning the use of lawless methods for achieving political aims, but also threatening to take drastic measures against the terrorist groups.

It is most deplorable that the violence of a handful of terrorists obscures the heroic feat of self-restraint by the Palestinian Jews during the horrible days between 1936 and 1939, when Arab attacks, government negligence, and sinister provocations made national self defense imperative. In those days, the Yishuv added a new chapter *"Havlagah"* (self-restraint) to the history of Jewish ethical conduct, and lent new vitality to the spiritual glory of Israel. In those days, events in Palestine filled our hearts with sorrow and disappointment over the suffering of our brethren, but also with pride and courage because of their spiritual self-control. Gratefully we hailed Jerusalem then as *"kiryah ne-emanah"* ("the faithful city"). Today the false friends of Zion cause us to utter the lament of the prophet, "Her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her

enemies, . . . and from the daughter of Zion, her beauty is departed."

Embittered as we may feel over the terrible acts of the small, sinful band of "enemy-friends" of Zion within our midst, we must not regard them alone as culpable. When we reflect on the causes that stir human beings to such conduct, when we turn our attention to the sources of the infection that breeds this violence, we cannot exculpate the British administration. When a member of Parliament in London, or a government official in Jerusalem lays down the moral law to Israel, and seeks to accuse the Yishuv of collective responsibility for the condemned behavior of the irresponsible few, we cannot suppress the memories of the Struma, the Patria, the denial of asylum to hounded, horror-stricken, homeless refugees, the deportation from Palestine to remote islands of Jewish fugitives from persecution, and the hard, cold, cruel indifference to the suffering of Jews in Nazi concentration camps. Above all, we must condemn as the most flagrant injustice and lawlessness the illegal White Paper of 1939, against the enforcement of which the present violence is a protest, a desperate, mad, vicious protest. We, therefore, hold the British government and the Palestine administration themselves morally responsible for provoking the very violence that they, and we with them, condemn. They have driven sons of a peace-loving people to acts of desperation and crime.

In view of that responsibility, we join the Jewish national agencies in denouncing the shameless effort of the officer administering the Palestine government, J. Z. W. Shaw, and the commander-in-chief of the Middle East, General Sir Bernard C. Paget, who attempted to "saddle Palestinian Jewry and the Jewish people with collective responsibility for acts of terrorism and ignore the substantial contribution to the war effort by Palestine Jews."

And we condemn, as does the Yishuv, the latest outrage of the Palestine government in deporting from Palestine persons suspected of complicity in terrorism without even granting them any legal recourse to establish their innocence. Is government lawlessness any less cruel or unjust than individual lawlessness? Neither can be condoned. Both must be condemned. Law and order must again be restored to Palestine. But the law must be binding on the official government as well as on those governed, else the order which it sanctions is not justice but tyranny.

REALITIES AND VALUES

ARGENTINA HAS BECOME A focus of infection for the Nazi bacillus on the American continent. Vincente Lombardo-Toledano, president of the Latin-American Federation of Labor is quoted by the J.T.A. as authority for the statement that the Argentine government is flooding Latin America with millions of anti-Semitic pamphlets and other anti-democratic propaganda. And Argentina was, of all places, the land chosen by Jewish non-Zionist philanthropy for colonization of Jews in preference to Palestine. Those charitable Jews who see in the problem of Jewish homelessness only a problem of resettling so and so many homeless individual Jews had better reflect on the fate of Argentine Jewry. The Jews of Argentina had been settled in that country on the basis of just that kind of "non-political," philanthropic ideology.

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IT IS GENERALLY CONCEDED BY modern-minded men that religion should concern itself with the achievement of a more harmonious and more abundant life on this earth rather than in some fancied

other world after death. But the technique for social action to be used by religious organizations requires careful study. They cannot effect much improvement by merely preaching in abstract terms. Such platitudes can usually be construed in a way that gives comfort to both sides of every controversy. But there is also great danger, both to religion and civic welfare, when religious bodies become immersed in partisan politics. They then lose their efficacy as an influence helping men to transcend momentary passions and personal and group selfishness. We have no general solution to the problem ready at hand. But the example set by some of the churches is often very instructive. We cite here two instances of social action by church bodies in illustration of commendable methods. (1) The Christian Citizenship Committee of the Congregational Council in Social Action advocated that its members "vote with Christian internationalism as a yardstick." They did not tell their members for whom they should vote but provided them with a tabulation of the voting records of each Congressman and Senator on measures of international policy. (2) In the city of Miami, the March of Time film, "Americans All," designed to promote better interracial relations, was rejected by all the commercial movie houses because it ran counter to popular prejudice. So the First Unitarian Church of that city rented the film and courageously displayed it for the education of the public.

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British Jewry is apparently divided on problems of general Jewish policy along lines similar to those on which American Jewry is split. The Anglo-Jewish Association, for example, is guided by the same ideology as the American Jewish Committee and the American Council for Judaism. (See our editorial in this issue, "Individual Rights Are Not Enough."); the Board of Jewish Deputies, however, representing the bulk of British Jewry, follows the same policy as the American Jewish Conference. Accordingly, the Anglo-Jewish Association, while it advocates the abrogation of the White Paper and the facilitation of Jewish immigration into Palestine, does not favor a Jewish Commonwealth and suggests that Great Britain seek other possible places beside Palestine for the resettlement of Jews. The Board of Jewish Deputies, on the other hand, asks that "Palestine be designated to become . . . a Jewish state or commonwealth." But our analogy is not perfect. At the request of the Board of Jewish Deputies, the Anglo-Jewish Association has agreed to defer sending its memorandum to the government and to reconsider the substance and timing of its proposed action. That shows more respect for the will of the majority of Jewry than the American Jewish Committee or the American Council for Judaism have so far shown.

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The Indianapolis *Jewish Post* has conducted an interesting poll of the delegates to the American Jewish Conference. It put two questions to them: (1) "Do you think the problems facing United States Jewry here should be included in the scope of the Conference?" (2) "Do you think the Conference should become a functional body and do its work under its own aegis instead of through established organizations?" One hundred and forty-nine delegates responded. Of these, 121 answered *yes* on the first question, and 28 *no*; on the second question, 86 answered *yes* and 62 *no*. Readers of The Reconstructionist know our own stand. Our answer to question (1) is *yes*. To quesion (2) we can-

(*Continued on page* 19)

Notes On Interfaith Work By Jews

By LEO TREPP

INTERFAITH work as part of our religious activities has grown to such an extent that an analysis of its essence and value is called for at this time. The main problem in this connection is whether the work as carried out today makes for our own spiritual growth or not. The following remarks are not intended to present such an analysis, they merely wish to give a few marginal notes, as it were, and in this way, perhaps lead to a discussion of the subject.

The Background

Our present-day interfaith movements are the natural and logical outcome of an historic process. Jews, in their various environments, have always compared their own culture with the cultures of the societies among which they lived and of which they were a part. They have influenced civilizations and in turn been influenced by them.

There could, however, be no genuine exchange of thought as far as religion was concerned, since the partners were too unequal. While one side held all the power and used it to defend its religious doctrine, the other side — namely the Jewish — had none of this power. Thus the disputations between rabbis and priests as carried on in the middle ages, often for the amusement of emperors, were nothing but a farce, since the outcome had been decided upon by the dominant power, even before the argument had started. Moreover, their aim was not to promote understanding between two *equal* religions but to prove that the two religions were not equal and that one ought to be abandoned by its adherents.

Only the separation of church and state, together with the progress of science even in the field of religion, and with the growing appreciation of the value of the human being as such, has made possible a conscious exchange of ideas and an unbiased comparative study of religion.

It would have been alarming indeed, had the progress of humanity and of democracy halted before this problem, and it is to be considered a healthy sign that the democratic spirit of science carried thinkers of all creeds towards this field of study in which mutual understanding was to be reached. It is, therefore, comprehensible that America, with its complete separation of church and state and its freedom of research, should prove fertile ground for this endeavor.

This, however, imposes a serious responsibility on American Jewry. True, interfaith activity is designed to promote more friendly emotional attitudes and better human relations between Christians and Jews, but, in order to do so, it must be based on knowledge and research. Only a true knowledge of our own Jewish civilization will allow us to become equal partners in this relationship of religious groups.

Jewish Interfaith Work in Its Double Aspect

The great many similarities in all creeds make the approach to the problem of interfaith relations easy, once these similarities have been discovered. The desire for a better understanding of Judaism and better relations between Jews and Christians should be the only motivation for any interfaith work on the part of Christians, unless we add the scientific interest.

For us Jews, however, there exists another motive. True, we wish to understand our fellow-man, and this in all sincerity. But we also feel the need to be understood. For, as a small minority, we are well aware of the fact, that our very existence depends on this understanding and the goodwill in which it may result.

The former motive may be considered a spiritual one. It broadens a person's religious horizon, improves the character, leads to brotherhood and thus towards the establishment of a better society.

The latter motive is not unqualifiedly spiritual. It is a good motive in so far as it endeavors to put our relationship with our neighbors on a human basis instead of a merely legalistic one. It is, however, predominantly practical.

While the Christian, who is motivated by the former principle, grows spiritually by putting it to work, the Jew will not grow spiritually through interfaith work unless he too is aware of its spiritual aspect and is motivated by it.

It may appear on the surface, that it makes no difference which of the two motives predominates as long as the work is done. But this is not so; this is not a case where good action based on interested motives leads to similar action motivated solely by idealistic considerations, on the principle that *"Mitokh shelo lishmah ba lishmah"* ("The observance of a precept, even when it is done from interested motives, leads to its performance for its own sake").

The Scope of the Interested Motive

The interested motive is merely to demonstrate the fact to the world, that we Jews are like others in our fundamental doctrines and principles, our ethical standards, our participation in worth-while endeavors, and our patriotism. This can be shown with comparative ease by anyone making a study of it. All that is necessary is a knowledge of comparative religion, of statistics and of history. This interfaith work may well be entrusted to one man or a few men in a community, who then may do the work for their community, but independently of it. If a rabbi undertakes it, it nevertheless lies outside his field of spiritual leadership, as far as his congregation is concerned. Even the occasional exchange of pulpits with Christian ministers makes the congregation a spectator rather than a participant in this activity, and although the Jewish community may profit by it, the spiritual gain for the average Jew is small.

There is, however, another danger in interfaith activity as commonly conducted, beside its tendency to divert the rabbi from his task of spiritual leadership. Interfaith work can be and often is carried out without a thorough knowledge of Judaism. This entails the danger that, in time, we may cease to be true to one of the basic principles of the entire movement, that of scientific research. We may thus become again unequal partners in interfaith exchanges. This time it would not be because we are inferior politically, but because we would be inferior in our actual knowledge. We have to realize that the great centers of Jewish training in the East no longer exist and that we have to develop Jewish scholarship with the scientific and human resources which we have. If we wish to remain the equals of our Christian partners in this free trade in ideas, we must develop true Jewish scholarship, not only as the basis for this exchange of thoughts, but also for the growth and development of the Jewish spirit.

While the scope and the implications of an interfaith activity based on the practical motive only may well fill us with apprehensions, the situation changes

entirely if the spiritual motive become the guiding force.

The Scope of the Disinterested Motive

The aim of the spiritual motive is a two-fold one. Its aim is to teach those of our people who have not overcome the inferiority complex which their European past gave them that, beyond the confines of Jewry, there are people with whom association is both possible and spiritually enriching. And it is to teach those of our people who believe that the price of this association is the denial of their Judaism that the contrary is the truth. This work then will tend to stabilize our own group emotionally, and will thus have a lasting effect on the inner life of Jews. It will make Jews aware that they need not be ashamed of their Judaism, nor boastful of it, but can accept it with the natural dignity of a well-adjusted human being secure in his heritage. Whether this goal can be reached elsewhere than in Palestine is open to question, but it should be kept before the minds of all those who engage in interfaith work. We have to remain equal partners in this activity. That means that we must bring out not merely the common elements of Judaism and Christianity but the differentiating factors as well. For it is by these factors, which give a religion its distinctive character, that its contribution to the common weal can be measured. On these contributions, which no other group can make for it, rests the claim of the group to recognition by the community.

Whatever incidental benefits Jewry may at present derive from interfaith activity, Jews will derive no spiritual gain from it until they are qualified to participate in it, until education, Jewish education, goes hand in hand with it. The Jew should be able to face his non-Jewish neighbor intelligently, understandingly and with an open-mindedness that comes with a sense of spiritual security based on self-knowledge. True interfaith work is thus not the task of a few, but of the masses and, if we expect lasting results from it, we on our part have to educate *our masses.* In this way we may make certain at least of our own spiritual growth.

Interfaith work based on these principles will have a great many valuable results beyond the attainment of its immediate aim. Zionism, by directing the attention and the efforts of Jewry as a whole towards a common project, has done more to unite the various groups of Jews, to iron out differences and remove factional bias and discrimination than any other movement. A concerted interfaith activity may have similar consequences.

A deeper understanding of both the universal and the unique values of Judaism on the part of Jews should be helpful in uniting our own people. It leads to better mutual understanding among Jewish groups as a by-product of the quest for mutual understanding among all religious communities.

Pursued in the proper spirit and established on the right foundation, our interfaith work may thus help both to build a better world, and aid Jewry to grow spiritually. But if it is undertaken in the wrong way, it may both do us a great deal of harm and defeat its own purpose of improving human relations generally. Interfaith work is one of the greatest achievements of our age, one of the finest results of the growth of democratic ideas. We should engage in it, but should do so in a way that will lead all who participate in it to grow in spirit and knowledge and thus to qualify themselves for cooperation in the upbuilding of a better world.

Faith

By ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

(Concluded from our last issue)

To Believe Is to Remember

Not the individual man nor a single generation by its own power, can erect the bridge that leads to God. Faith is the achievement of many generations, an effort accumulated over centuries. Many of its ideas are as the light of the star that left its source a long time ago. Many enigmatic songs, unfathomable today, are the resonance of voices of bygone times. There is a collective memory of God in the human spirit, and it is this memory which is the main source of our faith.

However, faith is not a stagnant pool. It is rather a fountain that rises with the influx of personal experience. Personal faith flows out of an experience and a pledge. For faith is not a thing that comes into being out of nothing. It originates in an event. In the spiritual vacancy of life something may suddenly occur that is like lifting the veil at the horizon of knowledge. A simple episode may open a sight of the eternal. A shift of conceptions, boisterous like a tempest or soft as a breeze, may swerve the mind for an instant or for ever. For God is not wholly silent and man is not always deaf. God's willingness to call men to His service and man's responsiveness to the Divine indications in things and events are for faith what sun and soil are for the plant.

That experience survives as a recollection of how we have once been blessed by the manifestation of Divine presence in our life. The remembrance of that experience and the loyalty to the pledge given at that moment are the forces that sustain us in our faith.

For the riches of a soul are stored up in its memory. This is the test of character, not whether a man follows the daily fashion, but whether the past is alive in his present. If we want to understand ourselves, to find out what is most precious in our lives, we should search into our memory.

Only those who are spiritually imitators, only people who are afraid to be grateful and too weak to be loyal, have nothing but the present moment. The mark of nobility is inherited possession. To a noble person it is a holy joy to remember, an overwhelming thrill to be grateful, while to a person whose character is neither rich nor strong, gratitude is a most painful sensation. The secret of wisdom is never to get lost in a momentary mood or passion, never to forget friendship over a momentary grievance, never to lose sight of the lasting values over a transitory episode. The tide of things which sweeps through our daily life should never be a whirlpool devouring our energies, but a fountain from which to draw visions and ideas to enrich the treasury of our soul, our memory. That only is valuable in our experience which is worth remembering. Remembrance is the touchstone of all our actions.

An exquisite feature of the Jewish mentality is its phenomenal power of recollection. With a passionate tenacity we have retained through the ages the recollection of what happened to our people. Once a light had been kindled in the temple of our history, it was never extinguished. We are the keepers of ancient events. The immortal past of our people has survived with sustaining vitality in our thoughts, in our hearts, in our ritual. To us, recollection is a holy act; we sanctify the present by remembering the past. To us Jews, the essence of faith is memory. To believe is to remember. For what is the function of faith? Each of us has

at least once in his life experienced the momentous reality of God. Each of us has once caught a glimpse of the beauty, peace and power that flow through the souls of those who are devoted to God. But such experiences or inspirations are rare events. To some people they are like shooting stars, passing and unremembered. In others they kindle a light that is never quenched. Faith is loyalty to an experience. Faith is loyalty to an inspiration that has occurred to us. Jewish faith is recollection of that which occurred to our ancestors, of that which happened to Israel in the past. The events in which the spirit of God became a reality of history stood before our eyes painted in colors that never fade. Much of what the Bible demands can be comprised in one imperative: Remember!

Surrender to the Spirit

In the light of faith we do not seek to unveil or to explain but to perceive and to absorb the rarities of mystery that are gleaming softly from all things; not to know more, but to know what is more than anything we can grasp. Only those who maintain that all things in life and death are within reach of their will, will try to place the world in the frame of their knowledge. But how can our soul be insensitive to the fragrance of the unknown that is bestowed upon our life? What is most dear and real is neither known or knowable.

With the gentle sense for the depth of all existence, for the sacred relevance of all being, the man of faith can afford to forego the joy of knowing, the thrill of perceiving, bent upon by the ears, eyes, and mind. For he who loves the grandeur of what faith is alive to, dwells at a distance from his goal, shuns familiarity with the necessarily hidden, and looks for neither proofs nor miracles. God's existence can never be tested by human thought. All proofs are mere demonstrations of our thirst for Him. Does the thirsty need a proof for his thirst?

The realm toward which faith is directed can be approached, but not penetrated; approximated, but not entered; aspired to, but not grasped; sensed, but not understood. For to believe is to abide rationally outside, while spiritually within the mystery.

Faith is an act of spirit. The spirit can afford to acknowledge the superiority of the Divine: it has the fortitude to realize the greatness of the transcendent, to love its superiority. The man of faith is not enticed by the ostensible. He abstains from intellectual arrogance and spurns the triumph of the merely obvious. He knows that possession of truth is devotion to it. He rejoices more in giving than in acquiring, more in believing than in perceiving. He can afford to disregard the deficiencies of reason. This is the secret of the spirit which is not disclosed to reason: the adaptation of the mind to the sacred. The spirit surrenders to the mystery of the spirit not in resignation or despair but with honor and in love. Exposing its destiny to the Ultimate, it enters into an intimate relation with God. Faith is intellectual humility, devotion of the mind, a true offering, the finest feat the heart can perform.

Some men go without knowing on a hunger strike in the prison of the mind, starving for God. There is joy, ancient and sudden, in this starving. There is reward, grasp of the intangible, in the flaming reverie breaking through the latticework of notions.

Faith and Creed

Faith as the act of believing should be distinguished from creed as the content, as that in which we believe. Faith, itself as little rational as love of beauty or motherly affection, becomes a dogma or a doctrine when pressed into an opin-

ion. Our creed is, like music, a translation of the unutterable into sounds, thoughts, words, deeds. The original is known to God alone. And what is expressed and taught as a creed is but the adaptation of the uncommon spirit to the common sense. Yet it is the creed that keeps the flame when our thoughts go out and we lose the sight of our beloved dreams. For the words of our great sages, full of never aging grace, are to us like a mother that never forgets, that is not impatient of folly or failing.

There are many creeds but only one faith. Creeds may change, develop and grow flat, while the substance of faith remains the same in all ages. The overgrowth of creed may bring about the disintegration of that substance. The proper relation is a minimum of creed and a maximum of faith.

Driven by soaring faith to the delight of reaching out for God, men of faith have often been stabbed in the back by the idea that faith is not an elevation but a depression, a lower form of thinking, a substitute befitting the poor in the kingdom of reason. Strangely enough, many went down to reach the height, descending to insipid formulas, to words, that were shells without feeling.

Those who are prone to evaluate music with their tongue and the shades of color with their fingers, may be consistent in trying to compare faith with reason and to embroider religion on the academic gown of logicians. And who is not guilty of attempting to understand love as a syllogism and beauty as an algebraic equation? Only rarely has man resisted the temptation to aid faith by gaining approval for its claim from any impertinent science. In fact, the fascination that goes with the gentle power of faith lies in its defiance of our limitations.

The force that inspires the heart to believe is not identical with the impulse that stimulates the mind to reason. The thoughts that breed beauty in the songs of faith may fashion shackles around the reckless wrists of scholars. The purity of which we never cease to dream, the untold things we so insatiably love, the vision of the good for which we either die or perish alive—no reason can hold. It is faith from which we draw the sweetness of life, the taste of the sacred, the joy of the imperishably dear. It is faith that offers us a share in eternity. It is faith in which the great things occur.

We rarely manage to cross the gulf between heart's believing and mind's plain knowing. There is no common basis for comparing religion and science. It is impossible to render the visions of faith in terms of speculation, and its truth cannot be proved by logical arguments. Its certainty is intuitive, not speculative. Its apparent demonstration has often resulted in its frustration. Unlike knowledge, which is a quiet possession of the intellect, faith is an overwhelming force that enables man to perceive the reality of the transcendent. It is not only the assent to a proposition but the staking of the whole life on the truth of an invisible reality.

Formulated belief is an attempt to translate into words an unutterable spiritual reality. We should never forget that any attempt to vindicate belief does not deal with the original reality but with the translation; it tries to integrate an imitation into the system of original logical symbols. Moreover, from a rational justification of faith, we may gain the idea that the existence of God is as probable as ether in physics or phlogiston in chemistry, a hypothesis that can easily be refuted or rendered superfluous by a change of premises. Such a supposition is an impotent expression for the most powerful idea of the human soul. It tries to fill out the universe with a tiny abstract figure of speech.

In the realm of faith, God is not a hypothesis derived from logical assumptions, but an immediate insight, self-evident as light. To rationalists He is something after which they seek in the darkness with the light of their reason. To men of faith He *is* the light.

Faith is not an act of thinking logically and consecutively. Its ripe fruit is not a cold judgment, valid and correct when estimated from any point of view. There may be a great deal of vagueness in faith, lacking both distinctness and precision. Its body is too fine to be retained in the logician's sieve when sifted for formulas. Rational terms in which faith is expressed as a creed remain a varnish and do not render its essence.

The perceivable and temporal we grasp with our reason, the sacred and everlasting we approach through faith. It belongs to the genius of man to believe, to look up to what transcends his faculty to know, to perceive the things in their relation to the ultimate, to the eternally valid. However, since there is no borderline that keeps apart the temporal from the everlasting, the scope of faith can hardly be circumscribed.

Knowledge is the integration of the unknown with the known; faith is the integration of the known with the unknown. The historian explains the suffering of Israel with the geographical condition of Palestine, that, situated astride the crossroad of three continents, was exposed to the ambitions of conquerors. The prophet speaks of a divine plan to let Israel be afflicted in order to atone not for his own sins but for the sins of the heathens.

Faith is something that comes out of the soul. It is not an information that is absorbed but an attitude, existing prior to the formulation of any creed. It is the insight that life is not a self-maintaining, private affair, not a chaos of whims and instincts, but an aspiration, a way not a refuge. In the impact of our forces —body, intellect, will, imagination, emotion—with reality, we stumble upon the poverty of our justice and glimpse the richness of values we can dream of.

Faith the Root of Thought, Emotion and Action

Reason is not the measure of all things, not the all-inclusive power in the inner life of man. The powers of will and emotion, the realm of the subconscious lie beyond the scope of knowledge. The rush of reason is an effort of limited strength.

Faith is not a miniature of thinking but its model, not its shadow but its root. It is a spiritual force in man, not dealing with the given, concrete, limited, but directed upon the transcendent. It is the spring of our creative actions.

In believing we anticipate what reason, will, and emotion may grasp afterwards. The evaporation of believing sheds drops of reason into the mind. All action is vicarious faith.

Reality is not exhausted by knowledge. Inaccessible to research are the ultimate facts. All scientific conclusions are based upon axioms, all reasoning depends ultimately upon faith. Faith is virgin thinking, preceding and transcending all knowledge. To believe is to abide at the extremities of spirit.

Are we able to prove the principles upon which we rely in our actions? The things we accept are more numerous than the things we gain by our own inquiries. Our knowledge contains more that is inherited than explored. As individuals we owe more to tradition than to our own research.

For the reality, which man has at his disposal here and now, is narrow and limited. What will happen in the next instant, what is beyond the scope of his direct experience, what lies ahead in time or remote in space, is behind a veil, re-

condite and obscure. Nobody can prove that the sun will rise tomorrow. Man has to take into consideration latencies and uncertainties, contingencies, surprises and chances. He may be shaken and he may recoil before the perilous impact of possibilities, he may hesitate to go forward, suspend the next step and live bewildered, in a quandary. Or he may take the leap in the dark haphazardly. Were men not in possession of courage, foresight and trust, which are the general conditions of faith, there would be no activity.

Man has to venture, to risk, not to be afraid of possible failures, but be defiant of peril, ready to suffer without thinking, willing to take upon himself grief and anguish, pain and sorrow. Man needs foresight in order to sense what is behind the veil, to anticipate the potential, to scent from afar the qualities and values of reality. Only weariness and fear counteract these forces, stemming and hindering man's efforts and strivings.

There is neither advance nor service without faith. Nobody can rationally explain why he should sacrifice his life and happiness for the sake of the good. The conviction that I must obey the ethical imperatives is not derived from logical arguments, but originates in an intuitive certitude, in a certitude of faith.

There is no conspiracy against reason, no random obstinacy, no sluggish inertia of mind or smug self-assurance, entrenched behind the walls of believing. Faith does not detach man from thinking, it does not suspend reason. It is opposed not to knowledge but to backwardness and dullness, to indifferent aloofness to the essence of living. It is not an isolated trend of the mind, but is in need of clarification and of a corrective in order to establish the contents and objects of belief, to secure its inner consistency. It is a distortion to regard reason and faith as alternatives. Reason is a necessary coefficient of faith. Faith without explication by reason is mute, reason without faith is deaf. There can be a true symbiosis of reason and faith.

The account of our experiences, the record of debit and credit, is reflected in the amount of trust or distrust we display toward life and humanity. There are those who maintain that the good is within our reach everywhere; you have but to stretch out your arms and you will grasp it. But there are others who, intimidated by fraud and ugliness, sense scorn and ambushes everywhere and misgive all things to come. Those who trust develop a finer sense for the good, even at the high cost of blighted hopes. Charmed by the spell of love, faith is, as it were, imposed upon their heart.

Actually trust is the core of human relationships, of gregariousness among men. Friendship, a puzzle to the syllogistic and critical mentality, is not based on experiments or tests of another person's qualities but on trust. It is not critical knowledge but a risk of the heart which initiates affection and preserves loyalty to our fellow-men.

Faith does not spring out of nothing. It comes with the discovery of the holy dimension of our existence. Suddenly we become aware that our lips touch the veil that hangs before the Holy of Holies. Our face is lit up for a time with the light from behind the veil. Faith opens our hearts for the entrance of the Holy. It is almost as though God were thinking for us.

Book Notes

Z'MANIM TOVIM, by Daniel Persky. Pardes Publishing Co., New York, 5704.

JEWISH holidays have been studied from various viewpoints. Many authors have stressed the agricultural origin of the holidays; some lay emphasis on their national aspect; others stress their legalistic and religious elements. Very little, however, has been written about the holidays and festivals from a human viewpoint, revealing their lighter, and more frivolous side, which is usually discussed only by columnists and writers of light articles.

Daniel Persky is among the few who have developed this interesting side of the holidays. Several years ago he published a book which he aptly named *"Matamim La-hag"* (Holiday Dainties), to which his new book *"Z'manim Tovim"* (Happy Days), is a companion volume. Here, however, he deals with the subject in a more elaborate and more comprehensive manner.

"Z'manim Tovim" covers all the notable days of our religious calendar beginning with Rosh Hashanah and ending with the 9th of Ab. The book sparkles with bits of wit and humor. But, though Persky is a true Jewish humorist, or because of it, he quite frequently becomes very serious.

In one of his articles he poses the question, "What is the difference between week-days and holidays?" to which he replies: "On week-days we live our individual lives for ourselves, with ourselves and in ourselves, while on holidays we live our group life, we attain the sense of belonging, we feel that we are part of a group, of a congregation, of a people."

In connection with Yom Kippur, the author remarks that there are two traditionally known categories of sins: sins between man and man, and sins between man and God. But he, the author, finds it necessary to add two more: sins between a man and his people, which a man commits when he isolates himself and becomes detached from his own people, and sins committed against one's own self, which are brought about by effacing one's own individuality, by submerging one's ego in the mass.

In another essay on Yom Kippur, Persky refers to still another category of sin. He calls it "disregard of human life," the crime which all mankind is now committing.

The greatest number of articles in *"Z'manim Tovim"* are devoted to Hanukkah. "The Eight Days of Hanukkah," he states, in one of his lighter articles, "correspond to the eight kings of the Hasmonean Dynasty." When the author is in a more serious mood, he discusses the "fifth column" menace which plagued the Maccabean period too.

In his group of Purim articles, Daniel Persky tells elaborately the story of the festive Purim celebration in Tel Aviv. It is a celebration which has never been equaled in the Diaspora. Young and old participate, and the center of attraction is the Purim carnival, which draws people from far and wide, Jews and Arabs alike.

Persky devotes a special article to the Hebrew word for "carnival." About fourteen years ago the city of Tel Aviv announced that a prize woud be offered for the most appropriate Hebrew name

for that word. This word contest became a national issue. Such writers as the famous Bialik and Tchernichowsky joined in. Three hundred different names were suggested. The happy winner was I. D. Berkowitz, the son-in-law of Sholem Aleichem, and translator of Sholem Aleichem's books from Yiddish into Hebrew. The accepted word *"Adloyoda"* is a combination of three Hebrew words into one. The separate words are *"ad d'lo yada,"* meaning "until forgetfulness," and alluding to the injunction of the Rabbis to drink on Purim until one is unable to distinguish between the *"arur"* ("cursed") applied to Haman and the *"barukh"* ("blessed") applied to Mordecai. This expression when pronounced as a single word of four syllables has an excellent phonetic sound. Persky describes this unique contest in detail in order to show how much importance Tel Aviv attaches to this joyous festival.

The last group of articles in the book is on the Fast of Ab. In describing the observance of this Fast in Tel Aviv, the author says that he has never seen anywhere such complete mourning. All lights in the streets of Tel Aviv are out, and the city is enveloped in complete darkness. Gloom reigns everywhere. Thus the 100 percent Jewish city mourns the destruction of the Temple and the loss of Jewish independence.

This brief evaluation of Daniel Persky's book will not be complete without saying a word about the Hebrew style of the book. While the author is a student of classic Hebrew, of the Hebrew of the Bible and of post-Biblical literature, he is at the same time one of the very few Hebraists in America to whom Hebrew is a living tongue. In order constantly to enrich his language, he follows keenly the language spoken and the literature published in Palestine. His language has therefore become a true synthesis of the ancient classical Hebrew and the ultra-modern spoken word in the streets of Tel Aviv today. It is always rich and colorful, sometimes, even too rich. At times it happens that Daniel Persky gives one the impression that he is interested in the word, in the expression, more than in the thought. But, though one sometimes feels that he is indulging in some linguistic acrobatic stunt, he is always refreshingly interesting.

BERNARD ISAACS

THE JEWS IN RUSSIA—Vol. I. The Struggle for Emancipation. By Louis Greenberg. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1944.

RABBI Greenberg has made a contribution to the critical studies of Russian Haskalah. The chief burden of this volume is the story of the futility of Haskalah as a medium of ameliorating the political, economic and social conditions of Russian Jewry during the reigns of Alexander I, Nicholas I and Alexander II. Russian Haskalah, like the German variety after which it was patterned, sought vainly to effect a *quid pro quo* relationship with the ruling powers. In return for raising the cultural level of Jews, teaching them the vernacular, inducting them into secular schools, awakening their interest in agriculture, the Haskalah hoped to extract from the government emancipation for the Jews. This was doomed to failure because, as Dr. Greenberg indicates, the government fluctuated between half-hearted paternalism, with which it hoped to effect the obliteration of its Jews through assimilation, and the reverse policy directed toward keeping the Jews cut off from all avenues of European culture.

The early career of Russian Haskalah, as Dr. Greenberg correctly charts it, was that of naive and sycophantic writers who read into every condescension of the

Czars a portent of imminent salvation for their people. The bankruptcy of this wing of Haskalah inhered not only in its self-delusion but in the fact that it ran interference for the reactionary regimes and thus tended to depress the spiritual condition of Russian Jewry to even greater depths. One of these writers was Judah Loeb ben Noah who in 1804 wrote a craven apologia to the effect that Russian Jewry had been self-deluded, blind and ignorant until Alexander opened its eyes.

There is, however, another period in the Haskalah movement the importance of which to the ultimate development of Zionism has been given insufficient attention. Dr. Greenberg alludes to it in his references to the evolution of the national emphasis in Micah Joseph Lebensohn's poetry. This, too, is Haskalah. To understand it aright, we must understand that there were actually two Haskalahs—one assimilationist, the other evolving inexorably into Zionism. The first was truncated and frustrated at the dead end of Czarist repression. The other, having as its objective national liberation, was not impeded by the internal disabilities of Russian Jewry. Many more writers were identified with this aspect of Haskalah than is generally supposed. For example, Solomon Judah Rappaport's *Sheerit Yehudah,* published in 1827, is a nationalistic drama whose only original part (the rest is a reworking of Racine's *Esther*) is an exposition of Israel's national ideals. Judah Loeb Gordon, far from being a denationalized reformer, wrote in a letter published posthumously, "The return to Zion has been the dream of my heart throughout my life."

Dr. Greenberg's volume is crammed with an enormous amount of valuable information without which one cannot understand much of contemporary Jewish life. It tells of "a world passed by," and he does us a service by contributing to the task of preserving its memories.

DAVID POLISH

REALITIES AND VALUES

(*Continued from page* 9)

not give a categorical answer. Our response, in accordance with our editorial on the future of the Conference in the October 6th issue of our magazine, would be that the Conference should consider convening a constituent assembly to organize a permanent body for performing all the functions which American Jewry might wish to delegate to it.

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THE COMMON COUNCIL OF Milwaukee has recently passed an ordinance outlawing the publication or distribution of unsigned posters, pamphlets, books, pictures or other printed material exposing any religious or racial group to hatred, ridicule, contempt or obloquy. How effective such a measure can be in curbing anti-Semitism and similar manifestations of hatred directed against other groups remains to be seen. Certainly much mischievous propaganda is circulated anonymously, and the issuing and distribution of such material should be checked if possible. At least this attempt to curb hate-mongering is not subject to the criticism advanced against certain other legislative measures for banning anti-Semitism. No one can say of it that it opens the way to the unjust abridgment of free speech. Anonymity means irresponsibility, and freedom must ever be accompanied by responsibility; otherwise it ceases to be freedom and becomes mere license.

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AT LONG LAST, THE PALESTINE Government has released some 10,300 of the unused immigrant visas allowed un-

der the White Paper and promises that, when these are exhausted, the remaining visas will be distributed. It is probable that the government has been hoarding these visas for so long because it wished to defer the final total exclusion of Jewish immigration until the whole matter of British policy regarding Palestine could be considered afresh. The release of these visas thus seems to indicate a forthcoming change in policy. Just what the new policy will be is subject to conjecture, but not too much credence should be given to current rumors. One point needs to be emphasized: that no change in the general policy of the Mandate may be made without America's consent. What the American policy is regarding Palestine has been summed up in the President's message to the Z.O.A. Convention and in the Palestine Resolution, calling for a Jewish Commonwealth, which will soon be reintroduced into the House and Senate with every prospect of its passing.

AS THE SERVICEMAN SEES IT

It is our intention to publish, from time to time, letters which were sent by servicemen to their relatives or friends and which reveal the serviceman's reaction to the problems and interests of Jewish life. Readers who have such letters in their possession are requested to send copies of them to us for publication. Please do not send the original, as we assume no responsibility for returning the letters. Let us know, whether we are authorized to publish the names of the author of the letter and of the person to whom it is addressed.

Editors

Dear Ma, Pa, Howard and Mildred:

Last night we attended the services at the local Reformed Temple and it sure is Reformed. The services started at 10 and were over at 12—really streamlined. Then we were invited to a home for dinner—an elderly couple who came to Beaumont from Warsaw in 1906 through Galveston. Their children are all married and settled throughout the country—Houston, Kansas and the Bronx—and the old man is proud to admit that they all married Jews.

I view with skepticism the Jew-consciousness of the next generation in Beaumont. Reform Judaism in New York can continue to exist so long as there is an Orthodoxy present to remind them that they aren't yet completely Gentile. But here in Beaumont they are not surrounded by the tradition that can keep their youngsters inspired. The current Temple membership, prominent in civic affairs and conscious of their positions with the local Chamber of Commerce, have stretched the point to a thin strip in the hope of convincing their non-Jewish neighbors that no barrier of orientalism need prevent thorough assimilation. It is not a religious problem with the local Jewry. They freely admit they are Jews and support a beautiful Temple to prove it. But their youngsters are undoubtedly growing up with no trace of Jewish culture and tradition to resolve their position as a people. They will not be able to accept that culture and tradition and blend it with their other ideas. They will grow up to view Jewish culture and tradition as completely foreign to their beings—truly a tragedy, for they will be set adrift at sea when the anti-Semitic hammer falls. They will have no Gibraltar to fall back upon—no intellectual argument to dull the sword of our future Nazis—only a shallow plea for tolerance and mercy. . . .

I've been thinking of what I just wrote about the decline (as I view it) of that phase of Judaism in our smaller cities that is so worthy of our pride and respect. I used to consider George Santayana a complete hypocrite for openly admitting that he was a non-believer and yet completely accepting Roman Catholicism for its rich heritage of culture and tradition. I never thought I could feel that way toward Judaism, but I do. The Reformed Jew has by-passed the issue by "eliminating non-essentials and streamlining his ceremonials to suit our modern conditions." What he has really done is discarded rich traditions and torn asunder real binding forces. He has made useless concessions to a Gentile society.

Latin has bound the Catholic world. And when the only person in the Temple who can read Hebrew is the rabbi—then Judaism is gasping for life.

Love,

JEROME

(SGT. JEROME MOSHMAN)